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# Newspaper Clipping, Vietnam War's forgotten men

Ellen Ewing

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# Vietnam War's forgotten men

by Ellen Ewing

(Ed Note: This is the fifth in a series of nine articles concerning families of U.S. servicemen who are either missing in action—MIA, or prisoners of war—POW. The nine families all live within the geographical confines of the Spokane Diocese.)

San Francisco, 2nd Lt. USAF, only child of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Francisco, Burbank, Washington, was shot down north of the Demilitarized Zone Nov. 23, 1968.

He was the first American pilot shot down over North Vietnam

after President Johnson had ordered the bombing halt in 1968.

San DeWayne Francisco was flying an F4-D escort for an RF-4C on a photographic reconnaissance mission over the North Vietnam-Laos border. Another pilot, from Phoenix, Ariz. was with him.

Both are MIA. Nothing has been heard from, or of, either man since.

San's father, who owns a small cafe at the crossroads near Burbank on the highway to Pasco, said he fought in the Navy in World War II "and I'm a patriotic American.

This is the greatest country in the world. But the politicians are all alike. If they took the profit out of the war, we wouldn't be over there."

He is bitter. He believes the U.S. had "no business getting in over there." And he would like to give the North Vietnamese an ultimatum of 10 hours to get American POWs out of there, "or we're going in after them. I'd volunteer to go myself."

San's mother Esther said: "I am not bitter like my husband, because I know San was happy doing what he wanted to do. San loved being a pilot and thought he was doing what was right for his country. He said he'd stay in the air force until he retired and then teach school or go help small countries set up their economic systems."

She added: "San was the only child we had. He was born Feb. 29, 1944.

Nor has she given up hope of San coming back. "He was in good spiritual, physical and mental shape."

The senior Franciscos have heard nothing that would indicate San's fate—not from ex-prisoners of war, peace groups—not even rumors.



**SAN'S FATHER**—Harry L. Francisco said his son meant everything to him. "I tried to persuade him not to go, but he wanted to go. He volunteered—he wasn't afraid of anything."

Mrs. Francisco, who has taught the fourth grade in the District 400 Columbia School at Burbank for 13 years, plus eight years of teaching in Kennewick and four in Missouri, said it lifts her morale to talk to other POW-MIA families in the

area. They're a close-knit group, their closeness brought about by a common problem: husbands or sons POW or MIA and not too much real understanding from those outside the group. Telephone calls between the women are frequent and there is empathy and comfort.

San was born in Missouri and brought to Eastern Washington by his parents at the age of four. He graduated from Kennewick High School in 1962 where he lettered in football, track and wrestling. He had four years on the gridiron as a fullback, made the state wrestling championship two years in a row. He also made the honor roll. He was a husky 200-pounder standing 6-ft. 1-in. tall. He was a religious young man: active in the First Baptist Church in Pasco, later at Burbank "when we got a church started there," his mother said.

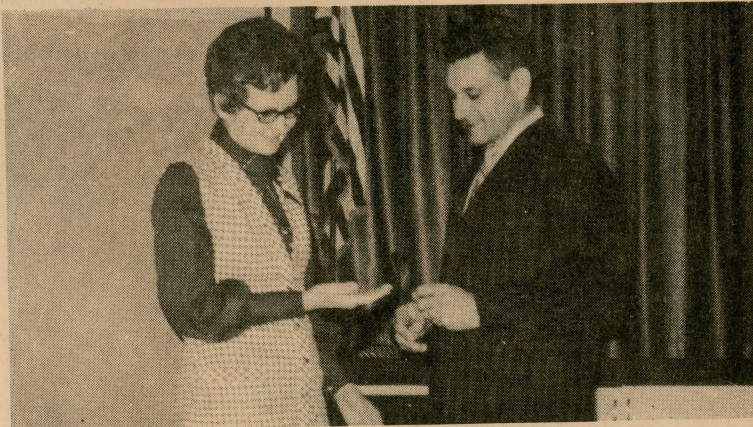
San paid his way through Central Washington State College by working in a meat packing plant. He majored in economics, minored in geography and education, and when he graduated in 1966 was commissioned through the Air Force Reserve Officers Training Corps at the college. He took part of his survival training at Fairchild AFB.

His mother, Esther, is active against hippie demonstrations and civil unrest. He was toward conservative, but she'd just ignore it.

Like other mothers, Mrs. Francisco believes this war should again be involved in war where the



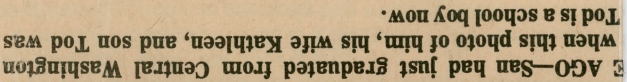
**A LIFETIME**—Mrs. H. L. Francisco, photographed receiving an award from PTA president in Burbank last April, has heard no word of her son since he was shot down in 1968.



**SAN'S MOTHER**—Mrs. H. L. Francisco, photographed receiving an award from PTA president in Burbank last April, has heard no word of her son since he was shot down in 1968.



Mr. San "was said San "was s, yippies, anti-war ns and campus wouldn't be hostile tentionous objectors—re them." area POW-MIA Francisco firmly country should not v in an undeclared Geneva Convention



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